

WRITING IS NOT JUST AN AID, IT'S A TRANSFORMATION OF CONSCIOUSNESS.

1. According to Ong, what is the relationship between orality and literacy?
  - a. Literacy comes after orality and changes the oral tradition.
  - b. Literacy is the technologization of the word. Literacy “outs” the spoken word, but is intimately connected to that which came before.
  - c. (p. 23) For a text to be intelligible, it must be reconverted into sound, directly or indirectly. ← You never completely lose orality, b/c in order for text to make sense, you have to convert it to aural information. (American sign language as an example)
  - d. Ong sees a place for writing, where Plato doesn't. “Literacy is imperious.” Even though orality comes first, literacy is seen as privileged, but Ong sees them as complementing each other.
2. What does Ong mean when he says writing is “artificial?” What is “natural” about orality?
  - a. (23) To say writing is artificial is not to condemn it but to praise it. It's indeed essential for fuller human potentials.
3. What is the relationship between writing and thought; writing and knowledge?

4. What does writing do?
5. Exactly how is writing a technology?
  - a. Speech requires sound, writing requires tools (pencil), but writing itself is a technology that allows for new modes of communication.
  - b. The technology of writing allows you to distance yourself from the process of writing itself.
6. Is writing therefore a medium?
7. What does writing do?
8. Exactly how is writing a technology?
9. Is writing therefore a medium
10. What is Socrates' (Plato's) view of writing? Of orality? What is the relationship of orality to literacy?
  - a. Written discourse can't defend itself, can't ask a question, ask it to defend itself (in contrast to speakers)
  - b. In oral culture, words are not obsolete ← Plato would consider this a fault

- c. The audience of writing can't be controlled
- d. Writing is not true wisdom, it's only its "semblance."  
(simulation?) the profoundest thoughts cannot be written down,  
fills you with the "conceit" of wisdom
- e. The text is static—it's always the same no matter how many  
times you read it—never possible to get new thoughts from it  
(comparing it to painting)
- f. Writing is a "pastime" and not serious business

11. What does writing do to memory, according to Plato? To knowledge?  
To thought? To the process of thinking?

- a. Writing destroys memory.
- b. Writing is only a reminder of thought, it can't teach you—  
writing can only remind you of what you already know.  
←product of a written culture? In an oral culture, there's no  
"verbatim."
- c. Writing is intractable. Set upon an idea and closed to discourse.

12. In this context, what purpose can/does writing serve?

- a. Writing is a reminder of prior knowledge.
  
- b. Under Plato's view, historical accounts would be chronologies of events.
  
- c. Writing destroys orality. With true orality, you can't have writing. Writing destroys memory.